

Our Boys and Girls

KRISS KRINGLE.

Just as the moon was fading
Amid her misty rings,
And every stocking was stuffed
With childhood's precious things,

Old Kriss Kringle looked round,
And saw on the elm-tree bough,
High-hung, an oriole's nest,
Silent and empty now.

"Quite like a stocking" he laughed,
"Pinned up there on the tree!
Little I thought the birds
Expected a present from me!"

Then Old Kriss Kringle, who loves
A joke as well as the best
Dropped a handful of flakes
In the oriole's empty nest.
—Thomas Bailey Aldrich.

HOW WILL IT LOOK?

A New Year Story.

It was the last hour of the old year. Five girl friends were gathered around the grate fire in one of the girls' homes. The proposal to hold a "watch meeting" had been made earlier in the day, and the evening had been a merry one, helped on by freshly made fudge. The frolicsome mood had passed now, and the room was growing cold. They drew nearer to the fire and talked in low subdued tones, glancing from time to time at a bronze clock on the bookcase, with its warning uplifted hands.

"It's been a beautiful year," one of them said, evidently thinking of the twelve-month past. "It seems like parting with an old friend you've tried and proved, and—taking on one you know nothing about."

"If we could only know that the new year would be as happy and pleasant for all of us as the old one has been," another girl observed and there was a little sighing catch in her voice. "But that's just what we can't do. Sometimes it makes me tremble all over to think what dreadful things might lie hidden hardly a step ahead, and we going on, laughing and talking, and never suspecting it. That's how it was with Julia Marsden—don't you remember?"

There was a momentary lull in the talk. Then one of the girls said:

"That's merely borrowing trouble. We must take things as they come. Ten to one, they'll never come."

The voice in the next girl who spoke was low and thoughtful. "I got up this morning, girls, before it was fairly light. I had a troubled dream, and it left me wide awake. The lawn was so beautiful under the new-fallen snow! Nobody was astir, and there wasn't a footprint to break the pure whiteness. When I went to bed I couldn't bear to look at it, all soiled, and trampled and smudged up. And it came to me since we've been talking, girls, that the blank page of the new year is something like the snowy lawn was early this morning. We haven't tried to write a word, or make a mark, or even take the pen in our hands. I've been wondering how the page will look a year from now."

"We shall have to wait till time tells the story," one of her companions said. "To do otherwise would be another case of what Laura just called 'borrowing trouble.'"

"No." The low, thoughtful voice was positive. "This is something that's in our own

hands, Marcia, and what happens to us isn't. If we're ever going to think how the new page will look, in our own eyes, and in the eyes of God, now is the time—before we've touched pen or paper. If we use care tomorrow morning, and every morning after, and every hour of every day, the record will be neat and clean, when the year is done. There may be tear stains on it, but there won't be unsightly blots."

The bronze clock chimed twelve. "Let's try, girls," Marcia said softly. The others nodded assent.—Selected.

HAPPY NEW YEAR.

"Happy New Year!"

"Happy New Year!" responded little Mary Ann, as she placed her basket of laundry on the sidewalk and looked up into the cheery face of the elderly lady who had greeted her and received a pleasant smile.

"Happy New Year!" she said a minute later, as Tim Graham ran by her.

"Humph," responded Tim, stopping quickly and turning around. "Aren't you putting on airs, Mary Ann?"

"They're not airs, Tim," said Mary Ann; "they're just things to pass along. Before I came out this morning, mother said: 'If you get anything good while you're out, just pass it along.' I got a real pleasant 'Happy New Year' from the white-haired lady you just met, so I'm passing it along to you. It's your turn now."

"Mebbe," said Tim as he turned away and pushed his bare hands deeper into his torn pockets. "But," he added to himself, "I wonder who'd care for my Happy New Year; guess I'll try it, though."

"Happy New Year!" he said in a half bashful way a minute afterward, as he met an officer of the law.

"Happy New Year!" responded the big policeman, cheerily. "It seems good to have a chap like you speak up so free and honest."

"Say, will you pass it along?" asked Tim, looking up into the face above him. "That's what Mary Ann said to me, sir."

"That's what I'll do my boy, and be glad to. It's a good thing."

"Happy New Year, ma'am," he said cheerily, as he approached an apple stand, behind which an apple woman stood shivering.

"Happy New Year!" said the apple woman, as Mrs. Murphy stopped to buy some apples.

"A 'Happy New Year' is it, you're giving me?" exclaimed Mrs. Murphy. "Sure, if it's a happy new year to the loikes of you a-shivering behind the apple stand, what moight it be to me sick man at home who has a good fire and plenty of hot gruel? I'll take that home to him, and sure he'll stop fretting because he can't get out to work till next week."—Exchange.

ENGINE OR FREIGHT CARS?

The author of a recent book to boys, in which he is urging them to stick to school, asks whether they want to be engines or freight cars.

The latter are things that just sit around waiting until they are pushed or pulled here or there by some other force. They are only made to carry burdens for other people. They do not cost so very much or take a great while to make. The workmen that make them

do not need to be especially skilled. When the cars are wrecked, usually they are piled along the side of the track and burned.

On the other hand, the engines comes out of the shop filled with power and throbbing with energy that only waits to be directed. They always lead and pull or push. True, they cost more than freight cars, and it takes longer to construct them. The workmen must be skilled men. Only the very best materials can be used in them. When they are wrecked they are carefully picked up and every part is saved to be used again.

The parable is a good one. Not only the youths, but their parents should consider it. Will the boy or girl be one to be shoved here or there at another's will? The temptation to the boy is to take the short cut and get out into business life. But he is likely to become a burden-bearer, and nothing more. A little more time and expense now will make a leader of him.—Unknown.

"JIMMY'S TEXT."

One day it was pouring rain, and Aunt Carrie was getting short of stories. Jimmy Bates said: "Let's play church."

There were five Bates children and two cousins. They put a chair for the pulpit, with the hassock for a step to get up.

The pulpit was so fine that each wanted to be the minister. They began to argue about it, but Jimmy said he ought to be, because he knew most texts, so he must be the "goodest."

"Why, Jimmy!" said Aunt Carrie.

But the others said he might, if they could take turns passing the plate.

The plate was mother's card tray. They had buttons for money. They began by singing a hymn with great enthusiasm.

Then Jimmy, with grandpa's spectacles 'way down on his nose, mounted to the pulpit. How they all envied him!

"My friends," began Jimmy.

"You should say 'brethren,'" said Helen softly.

"And brethren," added Jimmy crossly, "my text this afternoon is 'Do unto others as you would—'"

"Oh, Jimmy," wailed a voice in the first row, "you can't have that. You know you took my ball away from me this morning, and I wanted it so. You can't have that text."

"Never mind," said Jimmy. "My text to-day is, 'Judge not—'"

"But, Jimmy," piped up another voice, "you said you guessed Benny Green played truant yesterday because he wasn't in school."

Jimmy swallowed very hard, and, thumping the back of the chair with his fist, said: "Here's another: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

"Oh, Jimmy," howled the whole congregation, "not that. You ate up all the jam at the dolls' tea party, so we didn't have any!"

At this the poor little minister broke down and cried. Aunt Carrie said: "I know the best text of all: 'Love one another.'"

Just knowing texts isn't much use, unless we try to live them.—Selected.

TWO LITTLE MEN.

Two little men stood looking at a hill. One was named Can't and one was named Will. Can't said: "I never in the world can climb this hill."

So there he is at the bottom of it still.

Will said: "I'll get to the top because I will." And there he is now at the top of the hill. Two little men are living by the hill: At the bottom is Can't, at the top is Will.

—Selected.